

CAVAL launches disaster plan



Disaster Master, Max Borchardt — ready and waiting!

CAVAL, a Victorian consortium of academic libraries, has produced a disaster plan entitled *Disaster in Libraries: Prevention and Control*. The text has in part been derived from the disaster plan of the National Library of Scotland, but the contents have been reformatted to facilitate their immediate use.

Now that the disaster plan has been written, CAVAL members are being given instruction on how it should be implemented. CAVAL has assembled a Disaster Box, ready for use in libraries throughout Victoria. This box contains emergency equipment, items including protective clothing, mopping and swabbing gear, rolls of vinyl for covering shelves, equipment for recording the material damaged, first-aid equipment and a host of other valuable bits and pieces. According to Max Borchardt, library co-ordinator of CAVAL and convener of the disaster plan working committee 'disasters are never welcome but the damage they cause can be minimised provided one is prepared'.

Early in 1989, CAVAL will be running a simulated disaster for libraries to send their staff to for training. It will be a unique opportunity for institutions to have staff trained in the routines of disaster recovery.

The event will take place at Deakin University, Victoria's regional university with its campus near Geelong. Participants will be given the opportunity to get hands-on experience, using recovery equipment such as pumps, generators, emergency lighting as well as an opportunity to enter and recover materials from a simulated disaster-struck building. Those who attend will also benefit from a series of lectures on disaster and conservation issues, and have hands on experience of damaged material, processing it through the various stages of recovery, including freezing and humidification.

This simulated disaster called 'Lessons from Leningrad' is scheduled to commence on Tuesday, 14 February, exactly one year after the tragic fire in the Academy of Sciences Library in Leningrad, where over 60,000 volumes were totally destroyed and thousands more will require the attention and skills of trained conservators. Much of this material and indeed many of the 60,000 volumes that had been destroyed, could have been saved had the Academy of Sciences Library been prepared with a proper disaster plan and practised procedures.

CAVAL aims to ensure that all Victorian academic libraries are prepared for disasters, and in the event that one should happen, that they are in the position to save as many valuable items as possible.

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